

Heaven, Pt. 3

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[0 : 00] All right, 2 Corinthians 12, and what we're going to do now, we've spent three weeks studying hell, we've spent two weeks studying heaven, and in those last two weeks, kind of put down some teachings that were floating around and trying to establish doctrine from the Bible, from the only source of truth that's worthy of establishing doctrine.

And what we did, we took it from two different angles so far. The first was this law of contrast, contrasting what heaven is by understanding what it is not.

And we're looking upon the way the things are in this life, and then looking at what the Bible describes is not going to be outside of this life. It's a wonderful thing, some of the things we discovered. There'll be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more death, no more tears, and crying, and those former things are passed away.

And we understand those things very well. There'll be no more sin, there'll be no more tempter, or no more presence of the wicked around us. And just eliminating all those things that are negative in our life is one way to look at what heaven's going to be like.

And I stress this so many times, that when it comes to the holiness of God, or when it comes to the purity of heaven, or what it describes as, in thy presence fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore, it was my contention that although those words sound good, we just don't understand what that means.

[1 : 29] I think even a fraction of the pleasure we get here has nothing to do to be compared with what's going to be there. And so, studying it that way was one way to look at it. The second way was what John described in Revelation, some of the things that he saw and experienced when he had his, what I call it, the heavenly experience that John had.

He saw some activity. He described the brightness and the beauty and the color that showed up a lot around the presence of God.

We saw that it was a place of worship, noticing chapter after chapter after chapter, how it didn't take much for it to break out into a full-on worship session of the Lamb, and to him that sitteth upon the throne, and how they're just ascribing glory and majesty and honor and power, just over and over and over again.

And my statement from that is, you were made to worship. You were actually created to worship another. And it probably is skewed, and it is probably, in this life, it's probably perverted in some sense.

But now that you're saved, you can understand how there's fulfillment in worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ and understanding his worth and understanding his value and who he is in his person.

[2 : 46] There's a real true fulfillment and just natural thing for a believer to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. But as I try to state, in heaven, it's not going to get old.

You can't understand that now because it just feels like, why would we just do that all the time? And I don't know what it's going to be like. I'm sure we're not going to just do that all the time. But I don't think you're going to get tired of it.

I think it's going to be an exciting thing and a fulfilling thing for us to do that because when you see him and you understand in its reality and fullness of who you are and what you are and how you don't deserve to be here and where you should be right now, and then it's all because of him, it's just going to flow from you in the right way.

And I'm convinced of this, that heaven's a place of worship, and I'd love for us to get a glimpse of just how important that is and how significant it is.

But it's a place where God's presence, his holiness, his power, his glory, his light, all of that's on display. The last thing we looked at was how heaven's a place of satisfaction and complete

fulfillment, whereas on earth the eyes of man are never satisfied.

[3 : 56] But when they're opened in heaven, they're not going to lust for earthly things and for power and prestige anymore. They're going to long to just be with Jesus Christ.

So that's a glimpse and kind of maybe one that you can relate to or desire to relate to. And now we're going to move and shift this study into a little more of the doctrine of it and to the just part of doctrine is just digging in and extracting what the scripture says and just categorizing it and trying to say, okay, well, then that's true.

And it may not be moving in your spirit, but it's still just some truth to understand about the Bible. So look at 2 Corinthians 12. We read this verse at the very beginning of our study, and it's verse number 2.

Paul says, I knew a man in Christ about 14 years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth. Such an one caught up to the, here it is, third heaven. The third heaven. So the Bible distinguishes for us that there are, at least, there are three heavens. And I showed you the Mormons believe in three degrees of heaven, and they take that to mean this is the celestial heaven, and then they have two other ones, but as in you resurrect and you get to go to one of the three.

[5 : 19] And that's not a biblical teaching at all. That's just their moronic teaching. If you know the reason that word fits, then fine. 2 Corinthians 12 shows us the third heaven.

So it's something that we can receive that plain is that word right there, that if there's a third, there must be a first, there must be a second. There has to be at least three, according to that verse. If Paul would have said he caught up to the 17th heaven, then we'd be searching for 16 other heavens. But because he said third, and he was caught up to this third heaven, and he says in verse 4, it's paradise, and he heard unspeakable words, he heard such things that he's not allowed to tell, God sent him back to earth, and he wasn't allowed to tell these things.

And remember again, I'll just one more shot, all these guys that write their books and say, I saw Jesus, and then he sent me back to earth to tell you the story. That's not biblical. And so we can just, if God didn't let Paul tell it, he's not going to let some 75-year-old woman that's been on medication for the last 20 years come to earth and make money off of suckers.

All right. Okay, we're off to a great start here. The Bible distinguishes for us that there are three heavens. First thing I want to do is introduce something to you.

[6 : 44] You may never have heard this before, and it's just food for thought, but I'm just going to show you it's a teaching that's out there about the three heavens. And I personally don't agree with this.

I'll show you why. But it's worth thinking on. So come back to Genesis chapter 1. We do believe there are three heavens just on that verse alone.

So what are they? Where are they? Verse number 1, the first verse of your Bible says, Where was it before the beginning?

Hebrews says the things that are made were not made of things which do appear. What God made, this is not the third heaven where God dwells, the temple of God in heaven, any of that.

That's not it. This is the universe as we know it today, the firmament of heaven. But in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And there they are.

[7 : 53] Heaven, earth. You'll see those two words just from cover to cover running together, parallels, just there together. The heaven and the earth. The heaven and the earth. And then after that period, and another thought moving in continuation with, And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. God said, let there be light. And there was light. God saw the light, that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness, called the light day, and the darkness he called night. The evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. Let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament.

It was so. And God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. Now, we have a created heaven and a created earth in verse 1.

A lot of Christians today would say, no, that's just an introduction. It's an introductory comment, and then what follows is the creation. The strange thing is, is in verse 2, it doesn't tell us a creation of

the earth.

[9 : 07] The earth's right there. It's already been created. But the heaven's gone. Because all there is is water. And there's the deep, it's called. And darkness upon the face of the deep.

And this earth is submerged down under all of this water. Then God says, all right, in verse 6, let there be a firmament. And he opens up like a bubble, if you want to call it that, a vast expanse in those waters.

And he divides waters above and waters beneath. And he calls that heaven. That is not the same heaven as verse 1. That heaven was there, and then disappears.

It gets submerged or just destroyed by water. It's flooded out. And so a second heaven is created in verse number 8, and God calls that one heaven on the second day.

Now, the thought here is that the first heaven was given to Lucifer. The first heaven and earth, specifically the earth, was given to Lucifer.

[10 : 17] And he had authority over all of that, rebelled, and said, I'm going to set my throne above the stars of God. He's going to go all the way up. And he makes a decision to rebel against God, and God just squashes that rebellion.

And when he squashes that rebellion, he destroys the heaven that existed with water. He destroys the earth that then was with, it's void.

There's nothing there anymore. It's gone, completely, catastrophically wiped out. The earth is submerged in water. It's a very curious thing to start creation, to say, introduction, God created the heaven and the earth.

Okay, here's how I did it. The earth was without form and void. Where did that come from?

Darkness upon the face of the deep. Why is it in darkness? And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, the face of the waters, the top.

Darkness was up there, the face of the deep. Where did the water come from? Where did the earth come from? There's no description of him forming the earth. There's no description of any of that.

[11 : 27] And so the proper teaching is that God did something, and there was something alive and prospering, and it fell. It was judged. And when Moses picks up in Genesis 1 and verse 2, he picks up after that judgment, when God said, all right, the Spirit of God starts moving upon the face of the waters, and he divides that darkness that he set on the face of the deep.

He divides that and allows light. And now from then going forward, he separates the waters, and he creates a place he calls heaven. And so the thinking now, along with this thought, is that that would be the second heaven, in the sense of there was one before, destroyed, now God made a second one.

Now flip over to 2 Peter, look at 2 Peter chapter 3. And some of this language would seem to allow this teaching that what Paul sees is the third heaven after the second one gets destroyed.

We're going to read here in Peter that the second one is going to get destroyed. Find 2 Peter 3.

I'll start in verse 5, and we're going to read down to verse 13. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water perished, but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

[13 : 16] Because God's going to destroy this one. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is a thousand years, a thousand years is one day, the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us.

We're not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved. What manner of persons ought you to be, and all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Now flip over to Revelation 20. I'm almost done with this.

The thought that Lucifer was, the first heaven and earth was given to Lucifer, the second heaven and earth given to Adam, and then God's going to destroy all of that.

[14:27] And you see this mentioned in a prophecy here in verse 10, 20, 10, the devil that deceived them was cast on the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And it seems to match what Peter says about the elements dissolving and melting with fervent heat.

And then chapter 21, and I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And so the teaching is taking the Lucifer, then the Adam creation, and then what John sees in the future as heaven and earth, heaven and earth, heaven and earth.

And that's the third heaven that Paul was caught up to, or got to see the future, new heaven. And that kind of, I mean, some of that, there's a lot of truth in that stuff.

But the problem I have is, if you just read a little further in verse 1, if John would have said, I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the second heaven and the second earth were passed away, then that would really fit perfectly.

[15:39] But he doesn't. He says, the first heaven, the first heaven and the first earth, were passed away. And so I don't really find that what Paul's saying in 2 Corinthians 12, about the third heaven, has to do with a heaven, or sets of heaven and earth, as some teach.

I can't, can't ascribe to that, based on that verse right there in Revelation 21. However, Paul did say, the third heaven. So where's heaven 1 and heaven 2?

Where are we going to locate them, and can we? How about turn to Deuteronomy chapter 10? And so as you see already, this is going to be a little more intellectual teaching, of covering some stuff on heaven here, and trying to make some sense of it, because the Bible can be very vague, and it uses the same word, to describe more than one thing.

And it takes study, to pull these things out. Deuteronomy 10, look at this phrase here, in verse number 14.

Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's, thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

[17:05] This thought about the heaven, of heavens, seems to match, the third heaven, and the first and second, being included in the plural word, heavens.

It seems to match that. Seems to reference, the third heaven, as where God is, or God's abode. We'll see this again. Look at 2nd Chronicles chapter 2. 2nd Chronicles, we'll be in chapter 2, and chapter 6.

And verse number 6, 2nd Chronicles 2, 6, Solomon now, building God a house. Verse 5 says, The house which I build is great, for great is our God, above all gods.

But who is able to build him in house, seeing the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him? So it seems again, this same phrase shows up a few times.

It seems like it's pointing to the third heaven, where God's abode is. Look at chapter 6, and now we'll nail this part down again. First verse number 18, he says that phrase again.

[18:16] Chapter 6, verse 18, But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house.

So there's that phrase, and it's becoming a little common to use that phrase. It could be just, it could be just some kind of vague terminology, just to describe the heavenlies, but it seems that the heaven, singular of heavens, plural, is pointing upward to that third heaven.

So now look at verse number 21, and notice that this is where God dwells. Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place. Hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven. Again, look at verse 30. Then hear thou from heaven, thy dwelling place.

So putting these together, it appears this is the third heaven. This is God's dwelling place, where Paul was caught up to. So that's something Solomon says in his prayer.

[19:24] And notice that he uses the word heaven. The same word that's back in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 1. The same word in Genesis 1 and verse 8, I think it was, is where he called the firmament, this new thing he made, where he divided the waters, created this space, the space that he would on day 4, put the sun, moon, and made the stars also, and put them in the firmament of heaven.

And so the same word, is a word that's called, where God's dwelling place is. The Bible doesn't differentiate by terminology. It doesn't say third heaven, third heaven, second heaven, each time it uses the word.

It just keeps saying heaven, heaven, heavens, heaven of heavens. And so it can get muddled, but we're trying to lay it out and understand it. Look at Matthew chapter 5.

Let's just run a little chain here, just for the purpose of the redundancy of it all, to see this is something Jesus Christ said when he came on the scene and preached what is his maybe most popular sermon, they call it, the Sermon on the Mount.

And in these chapters, he refers to God being in heaven over and over and over and over again.

And so I'll start in Matthew 5 and verse 16, and just got to run through these next chapters quickly.

[20 : 47] Verse 16, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. That's not a big deal, right? I mean, we take that for granted.

He's in heaven. But this is establishing Bible doctrine, so we have to look at the verse. Let the Bible say what it says. Verse 45 of the same chapter. 45, That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

That's where he's at. Verse number 48, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven. He can't even say the word Father without giving the location or the dwelling place of the Father.

Skip to the next, oh, the very next verse, 6-1. At the end of the verse, see the very bottom of the verse, says ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Verse number 9, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. In verse 14, he's called your heavenly Father.

[21 : 49] That's also true in verse number 26. Yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Heavenly Father, or the Father in heaven.

What verse was that? 26? All right, look at just two more quick ones. Romans 7 and verse 11. And in the middle of that verse, how much more? Shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

And one more is 21. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. And this just goes on.

So, we've got Solomon making those statements in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ here in the book of Matthew repeatedly saying this, where the Father is. And I'll give you a side note to this. Look at John chapter 3. This is something we've studied in the Gospel of John a few times as it came up. Look at John chapter 3. And I'll just point this out, that Jesus Christ himself was in heaven while he stood in the body of a man on earth.

[22 : 58] He was in the Father in heaven. In John chapter 3. And start in verse 12. If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath ascended up to heaven. Just note that in your mind because that will come up later. Ascended up to heaven. But he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

And that's a phrase that's missing in many of the new versions of the Bible with good reason. They don't understand it. So they take it out. But the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, part of his nature and of the Trinity is that he is in the Father and he's in heaven while he is down here on the earth. And if you want some cross references for that, if you don't have them already, I'm not going to turn, but 14, 10 and 11 is where Christ tells Philip, he says, believe that I'm in the Father, the Father in me.

And on and on. Chapter 17 and verse 21 is another place where he says that he is in the Father while he's on earth, while he's praying to the Father. He says, I'm in you, in the Father.

[24 : 09] So speaking of heaven number three right now, the heaven of heavens, it seems that this is God's dwelling place where the Father dwells.

And so far, so good. Like I think we can say, yep, this is easy and this is what we understand. So where is that heaven exactly?

Well, let's see here. How do I want to do this? Let's do this. So we read that verse just there that the Son of Man, da, da, da, da, no man hath ascended up to heaven, except he, but he that came down from heaven.

So that gives us some sense of direction there, but flip over to Revelation 4. And I am only going to just pick a little bit of this.

We could get a lot, but I'd have you turn all over the place. So just get the thought from one or two verses here. Revelation 4 and verse 1.

[25 : 25] After this, I looked. John is back down on earth or he's had a vision in the first couple chapters. He was taken in the Spirit out into the future in the Lord's Day and he got some messages to send to churches.

But after this, he's back on earth. He says, I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven. The first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me, which said, come up, U-P, up. Come up hither and I will show you. I will show you things which must be hereafter. And he's on the aisle called Patmos. We'll talk about the door opening up later maybe.

And a voice comes down to him and says, come up hither. And verse 2, immediately, I'm in the Spirit and behold, a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne.

And he's seeing things. We've already read this last week. He's seeing other beasts there. He's seeing these creatures, these elders, four and twenty, falling down and worshiping, casting crowns.

[26 : 38] He's in this heavenly experience at the throne of God immediately. So, one thing we'll just pull out is that word up.

He goes up, right? Okay, flip over to chapter 11. Chapter 11. This same phrase shows up again and this time it's the two prophets or the two witnesses that are witnessing and preaching on earth and they're killed and then they're resurrected in verse 11.

After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet and great fear fell upon them which saw them and they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, come up hither and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud.

I know we just read over this stuff and I'm not prepared to really give you a full-on study of it but they ascended up to heaven in a cloud. Does that remind you of another place where somebody ascended up to a cloud?

And might also mention where we're going to be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air? There's something about those clouds in the word of God when God descends down upon Mount Sinai it's in a thick cloud.

[28 : 11] And I always just take that to say well he's veiling his glory which I believe but seeing these other scriptures when people are going up it talks about them being taken up into a cloud and there's something about that too.

But this is getting wild so we'll have to be careful but we know that he's ascending up off of the earth he's going up and he's going to heaven from earth now up if you're in South Africa or if you're in Canada and you just from where you're standing just start going up in the universe you're going two different directions right?

Does that not make sense? Like depending because this from what we understand and know up what does that mean in reference to what? so I'm going to have to suggest this that I don't know that they're going up that way is heaven or up that way would be heaven and you need some kind of cardinal direction some really something for our needle to point at and so I believe in going off of some scripture that this is a reference to due north and so let's take a real quick peek at one of these and we'll just pick it up next week on this so find Isaiah 14 Isaiah 14 if we have to figure it out then the only source is the word of God if the Bible's silent then we don't know and we're not going to speculate very much but if the

Bible does start to drop some crumbs then we'll try to put them together and see if we can't learn something and develop a doctrine Isaiah 14 here is Lucifer in verse number 12 how art thou fallen from heaven seems to be down fallen from heaven oh Lucifer son of the morning how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations for thou hast said in thine heart I will ascend into heaven I will exalt my throne above the stars of God it's up upwards I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of and there's a direction the north I will ascend above the heights of the clouds be like the most high no you're going to be brought down to hell to the sides of the pit not the sides of the north that's not for you the sides of the pits for you son so this direction north and we'll pick this up next

Sunday Lord willing and try to go forward if there's a cardinal direction north is true if you're or Australia down under or if you are in the arctic circle north is still the same direction and if we want to replace or say that up and ascending up to heaven is to go to the north then we could kind of not

have everybody taking off different directions into the universe and ending up as far apart as possible so there's more scripture on this so we're not just hanging it all on Isaiah 14 the sides of the north what does that mean so we'll put a few more verses on that next week and I don't know how I'm going to conclude this because I've got some stuff that I'm not sure about so for the very least we've got three heavens so far we know there's three the one the third seems to be where God dwells and first and second we'll discuss that a little bit more next week after we try to nail down this direction of where the third is we'll try to say okay if there's a third and we know that it's there

[32 : 14] God's abode is there in the far north then where is the second where is the first and is the Bible clear about that so that's what we'll try to finish up with next week Lord willing for now let's take us a break